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President: Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Peerthum, (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 44

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/574)

Draft resolutions (A/50/L.24, A/50/L.37, A/50/L.38)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Norway to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.24.

Mr. Biørn Lian (Norway): I take great pleasure in introducing, together with the Russian Federation and the United States of America, draft resolution A/50/L.24, on the Middle East peace process. The following countries have joined as sponsors of this draft resolution: Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Finland, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakstan, Luxembourg, Myanmar, the Netherlands, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ukraine and Uruguay.

The draft resolution is a follow-up to resolutions 48/58 and 49/88. It welcomes and gives full support to the achievements of the peace process so far and includes references to the agreements and treaties entered into during the past year.

The past year has seen great achievements in the Middle East peace process. The Interim Agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which was finalized in Taba, Egypt, and signed in Washington on 28 September, was a major accomplishment of the peace process. This Agreement, as well as the peace process in general, has produced remarkable results not only among the various peoples, but also within the region as a whole. One important consequence of the Interim Agreement is the Palestinian elections due to be held on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip in January 1996. Another is the Israeli redeployment from the West Bank town of Jenin earlier this month. We all hope that the current momentum will continue and that the final-status negotiations will begin, as scheduled, in the spring of 1996.

But we have also seen violent attempts from both sides to undermine the peace process. The tragic death of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on 4 November is a reminder that the peace process demands not only commitment and a clear vision of the future, but also considerable courage. We wish Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Chairman Yasser Arafat every success in the time to come. No one thought in 1993 that the road ahead would be smooth. It is not, but most Palestinians

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and Israelis know that this is the only road to a better future and that there is no way back.

Another milestone along the road to comprehensive peace in the Middle East was the Economic Summit held in the Jordanian capital, Amman, last month. The Summit assembled some 1,500 businessmen and politicians from many countries in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as the rest of the world. Who could have imagined such an event only a few years ago? Who could have imagined an event such as the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean Conference, held earlier this week? Such events radiate optimism and, in turn, inspire our optimism about the future. The Declaration of the Amman Summit is welcomed in the last preambular paragraph of the draft resolution.

However, the incidents that have taken place in southern Lebanon and in northern Israel lately are a reminder that there is still much to be done before we have a comprehensive peace in the region. The Syrian-Israeli track has also failed to produce any results so far. Paragraph 4 of the draft resolution stresses the need to achieve rapid progress on the other tracks of the Arab-Israeli negotiations within the peace process.

A peace agreement between Israel and Syria will be a major contribution to a lasting peace in the Middle East, and we hope that the statements made by the Foreign Ministers of Israel and Syria in Barcelona this week will prove to be a new start in the negotiations between the two countries.

An important element of the draft resolution before the Assembly is the call to Member States to expedite economic, financial and technical assistance to the Palestinian people during the interim period, as well as to the parties in the region, and to render support for the peace process. Economic development in the region is vital. Peace and stability at the regional level are not easy to achieve without peace on the domestic level, and vice versa. The international community can help achieve this. The new climate of coexistence and cooperation in the Middle East and North Africa must be protected and expanded, and this can be done by mobilizing financial resources to help the peoples concerned to develop their institutions, infrastructures and economies, and thus to be able to stand on their own feet. They should also be encouraged to engage in regional and international trade.

Economic development is particularly important among the Palestinians. The high unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip and on the West Bank is a serious problem. Peace will remain vulnerable if it does not produce tangible results for the people concerned. This peace process must be accompanied and strengthened by economic and social development and, as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for aid to the Palestinians, Norway follows development in the Palestinian areas closely. Economic development in the Palestinian areas this year has been better than previously expected, but it is extremely important that the international community continue to assist the Palestinian people in the economic and social fields. The forthcoming donor conference in Paris for aid to the Palestinians will be decisive in mobilizing support for much-needed development in the area.

Operative paragraph 7 points to the positive contribution that an active United Nations role can have in the Middle East peace process and in assisting in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles. Norway highly appreciates the strong United Nations support of the peace process. United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, Mr. Terje Rod Larsen, have given invaluable assistance to the Palestinians. The continuity and strengthening of their activities is of utmost importance to secure peace, prosperity and stability in the Middle East.

It is not only natural but also necessary that the debates and resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly reflect and support the positive developments in the Middle East. We should therefore concentrate our efforts on enlarging the common ground. Norway would like to reaffirm its readiness to continue to play its part in assisting the peace process in the Middle East.

The Middle East is abundant with human and natural resources. These resources can be used to create vital and prosperous societies, or to wage wars. Wars have been tried, with devastating results each time. This time peace is being tried, and the results after only two years are concrete and convincing.

The purpose of this draft resolution is not only to welcome the achievements of the peace process so far, but also to register the strong support of the United Nations Members for further efforts towards a

comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Many important issues remain to be solved. The resolution does not mention issues subject to negotiation between the parties. The same was true of last year's version. We believe that this Assembly should continue to be careful not to add to, nor detract from, what only the parties themselves can decide. We do, however, consider it vitally important that at this critical stage the world community expresses its continued support for the peace process through the United Nations General Assembly. We therefore recommend this draft resolution for unanimous adoption by the Assembly.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the Russian Federation, who also will introduce draft resolution A/50/L.24.

Mr. Fedotov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The delegation of the Russian Federation, as a co-sponsor of the peace process in the Middle East, has the honour, together with the delegations of Norway and the United States of America, to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.24.

Its major objective is to reinforce the successes achieved during the peace process in the Middle East and to orient the sides towards the speedy implementation of the agreements that have been signed.

We note with great satisfaction that during the course of the past year, enormous efforts have been made to achieve a decisive turning-point for the better in the evolution of the situation in the Middle East. The "treasure chest" of peace in this region has been supplemented by numerous achievements, including the agreement on the further transfer to the Palestinians of civil powers on the West Bank of the Jordan River.

Despite persistent difficulties, and the resistance of extremists, what we are witnessing now is a movement towards the establishment here of relations of peace, good-neighbourliness and cooperation. We are gratified to note that the peace process, which began in Madrid with, *inter alia*, the co-sponsorship of Russia, is now beginning to yield concrete results for the peoples of the region that are strengthening trust and interaction. A real reaffirmation of this was the Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit held at Amman, which was called upon to lay down reliable bases for regional cooperation and in so doing to prepare the region for the advent of the twenty-first century.

Russia favours a comprehensive and just solution to all aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict, without detriment to any of the parties. This is precisely the logic that underlies the Madrid formula for the peace process. We are convinced that expansion of the sphere of Palestinian autonomy and the forthcoming elections to the Palestinian Council will become an important milestone in implementing the hopes and aspirations of all Palestinians.

To ensure forward progress towards peace, including the establishment of Palestinian self-government, there is a need for external material support. In this respect, the draft resolution contains an appeal to Member States during the transition period to extend economic, financial and technical assistance to the Palestinians. Russia, for its part, is assisting the Palestinians, *inter alia*, by equipping and strengthening the Palestinian police and security forces. We also intend in all possible ways to promote the economic rebirth of this region, including the implementation of the projects indicated.

Of great importance also is the provision of the draft resolution to the effect that an active United Nations role in the Middle East peace process and in assisting in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles can make a positive contribution. We believe that our Organization and its specialized bodies, first and foremost UNRWA, UNDP and UNICEF, have extensive experience in carrying out various types of humanitarian and technical programmes in the occupied territories, and that their potential could be extremely useful during the process of the implementation of the Declaration of Principles.

The transformation of the Middle East into a zone of stability will not take on final form without progress on the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli negotiating tracks. It is expressly for that reason that the draft resolution stresses the need to achieve rapid progress on the other tracks of the Arab-Israeli negotiations. This also requires dialogue, the goodwill of the parties and the support of the international community. In this context, we are concerned by the unjustifiable delay on the Syrian track.

The degree of success achieved will to a great extent depend on a solution to the Lebanese-Israeli problem, which has its own specific characteristics and its own international legal foundation for a settlement. The basis for this continues to be Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which provides for respect for the sovereignty

and territorial integrity of Lebanon, the withdrawal of Israel from the south of that country, and also the need to protect the security of the northern regions of Israel.

We are convinced that the adoption of this balanced draft resolution will give political support to efforts to establish a post-confrontational Middle East, based on broad international cooperation and the accelerated economic development of that region. Russia attaches great importance to the multilateral aspect of the peace process, which is becoming increasingly concrete, and counts on the United Nations and its Security Council to continue in all possible ways to promote the progress of the Middle East peace process in all domains.

We hope that this draft resolution will receive the backing of all States.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the United States of America, who also will introduce draft resolution A/50/L.24.

Mr. Gnehm (United States of America): The draft resolution that we introduce today provides an opportunity for the United Nations General Assembly to reaffirm its support for the Middle East peace process, a process inaugurated over four years ago in Madrid.

Since that historic beginning, we have witnessed the 13 September 1993 Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the 4 May 1994 Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area, the 29 August 1994 Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities, the Jordan-Israel Treaty of Peace of 26 October 1994, the Protocol on Further Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities, signed at Cairo on 27 August 1995, and the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, signed by the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization at Washington, D.C. on 28 September 1995.

All constitute significant steps on the way towards achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. It is necessary and appropriate that the world offer its encouragement to the parties as they work to overcome the legacy of a past marked by hatred, war, suspicion and distrust. It is also imperative for the world to support the parties as they face the unending challenge of those on both sides who would, by violence and terrorism, undermine and reverse the strides made by the parties thus far.

That continuing challenge was demonstrated clearly in the tragic assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who committed himself to the peace of the brave and lost his life in pursuit of that noble endeavour. Despite this tragedy, we have seen the resilience of the process that was set in motion in Madrid and the rededication of those committed to the peace process. Only weeks ago, Israel handed full authority of the West Bank town of Jenin to the Palestinian authorities. More transfers of authority are currently taking place, in fulfilment of obligations under the various agreements.

The parties are committed to a resolution of their differences through negotiations, despite the brutal and bloody efforts of those who cannot stand the thought that peace and reconciliation are no longer the unattainable visions of a few dreamers. The recent Economic Summit in Amman also served as testimony to what peace can mean for the peoples of this region.

We hope that Lebanon and Israel and Syria and Israel will also achieve progress in their negotiations. In addition, I wish to reaffirm my Government's commitment to Lebanon's political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Those objectives were set forth in Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which my Government supports.

My Government has been intensively involved in numerous efforts to see that appropriate economic assistance is channelled in support of peace. This draft resolution clearly reflects the world community's view that such assistance for development is a crucial priority and should be fostered by the international community.

This draft resolution is a clear signal to the parties that the international community recognizes and supports their courageous efforts to reshape the world that future generations will grow up in. It is also recognition of what they have achieved by negotiating directly with regard to their differences.

The United States is proud once again to have worked with the representatives of Russia, Norway and many other nations in sponsoring this resolution. We invite the representatives of all States to join in expressing support for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Morocco to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.37.

Mr. Snoussi (Morocco) (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of Morocco, which is presiding over the Arab Group for the month of December, has the honour to introduce the draft resolution in document A/50/L.37, dealing with Jerusalem, on behalf of the following sponsors: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Djibouti, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

It should be pointed out, first of all, that the text of this draft resolution is identical to that of resolution 49/87 A, adopted during the forty-ninth session. In the operative part of this draft resolution, the General Assembly notes the illegality of Israel's decision to impose its law, jurisdiction and administration on the Holy City of Jerusalem and deplores the transfer by certain States of their diplomatic missions to Jerusalem, in disregard of Security Council resolution 478 (1980), and their refusal to comply with the provisions of that resolution. The draft resolution once again calls upon those States to abide by the provisions of the relevant United Nations resolutions and, finally, requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session on the implementation of the draft resolution to be adopted.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that the draft resolution I have just introduced will meet with general agreement and will be adopted without a vote.

The Acting President: Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed at 12.30 p.m.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Middle East region is in transition. It is leaving behind an era of war and conflict to start an era of just and comprehensive peace between the peoples of this important region. Because of this period of transition, all the parties concerned with the stability and prosperity of the region bear an added responsibility.

We should not convince ourselves that progress in the peace process will continue automatically or that it is unavoidable. On the contrary, we think that all the parties concerned are required to move the negotiation process forward, because the wide support the peace process has enjoyed so far has been linked in people's minds with the great expectation of regaining lands and rights, putting an end to bloodshed and initiating genuine regional cooperation towards arms control and the development of the region's economies with the aim of raising the standards of living of its peoples and putting an end to the suffering of those who have languished under occupation. These expectations have to be realized if genuine peace is to prevail.

Any objective evaluation of the peace process which began at the Peace Conference on the Middle East, held in Madrid four years ago, must highlight the accomplishments made so far in the context of that process. Most importantly, there is the agreement amongst the parties that the aim of the negotiations is full honest compliance with the frames of reference upon which the peace process has been founded. Those include Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) whose real content is the achievement of comprehensive peace between the Arabs and Israel in return for withdrawal by Israel from all the Arab territories it occupied in 1967, and the exercise by the Palestinian people of its legitimate national rights.

The negotiations have resulted in mutual recognition and a Declaration of Principles by the Palestinians and the Israelis. This Declaration of Principles has been followed by other agreements and steps to implement it. Most recently the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip was signed in Washington on 28 September 1995. According to that Agreement, Israeli forces will withdraw from Arab cities in the occupied territories and thereby make it possible to hold free Palestinian elections and pave the way towards the negotiations on the final status which, we hope, will put a definite end to Israeli occupation and lay the foundations for the Palestinian people's political independence. Jordan has also signed a peace treaty with Israel.

There are at present attempts to achieve similar progress in the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks and two summit meetings have also been held on regional and economic cooperation, in Casablanca and Oman. Egypt looks forward to hosting a third summit in 1996.

The movement towards peace is an indivisible whole. Such movement can lead to success only if it encompasses all aspects of the relations of the Middle East countries. Normal economic relations, for instance, cannot exist, grow and be stable under conditions of occupation by Israel of some Arab Lands. Also, regional cooperation in the interests of the prosperity of peoples will never succeed in the existence of the concepts of hegemony, the dreams of military superiority or the illusion of achieving security through the occupation of the lands of others.

Comprehensive complete and just peace is the real guarantee of the security of all parties. There is no doubt that the possession of nuclear weapons by one State in the Middle East threatens the peace and security of the entire region and increases the possibilities of proliferation of such weapons to other countries in the region.

That is why Egypt has continued to call for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East and the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction. This is an objective that is supported by the international community as a whole but, unfortunately, no progress has been made towards its achievement because Israel, who had insisted on direct negotiations with the countries concerned before such a zone could be established now refuses to enter into any negotiations on arms limitation in the nuclear field within the multilateral working group on arms limitation and regional security. Israel also refuses to take any confidence-building measures to demonstrate its seriousness in the nuclear field.

Egypt engaged in the peace experiment under very difficult circumstances and made enormous sacrifices that have not deterred it from pursuing the search for peace. Now, the Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel, which embodies the sound translation of the land-for-peace principle, all the land for peace, stands as a towering model. We in Egypt are very proud of this pioneering experiment without which it would have been impossible for the present peace process to begin or to succeed.

While we welcome all the positive developments in the context of the peace process, we are well aware of the threats that beset all peace efforts in the Middle East. A few weeks ago, the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, was assassinated by one of the Israeli extremists, the same Israeli extremists who assassinated scores of Palestinians while they prayed in the El-Khalil Mosque. We deplore bloodshed wherever it may take place. Such horrific actions are reminders to us all that these enemies of peace are prepared to go to any length and to resort to the most extreme acts of violence in trying to achieve their aims and this is exactly what all of us should agree to reject and to take all legitimate measures to condemn, to oppose and to curb.

In conclusion, we wish to reaffirm that the achievement of peace requires that every party should abide by its international commitments. We hope that the Israeli Government will continue to abide by the commitments agreed, as is the case at present with regard to the Palestinian party. We look forward to a more positive posture in the negotiations with both Syria and Lebanon. The strongest and most eloquent retort to those who would assassinate peace in the Middle East is to speed up the achievement of peace.

Mr. Al-Dosari (Bahrain) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Middle East is one of the world's sensitive areas in view of its importance and its impact on international peace and security. Therefore, the establishment and consolidation of peace in the region is a very important matter for the countries of the world, in view of the repercussions on other regions of the world. In order to establish peace and security in the Middle East, the international community has to find a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. My country's delegation wishes to stress that the peace process in the Middle East must be comprehensive and integrated because it is not feasible to focus on peace and development in one part of the region while the situation remains hanging in the air in other parts of the same region.

That is why due attention must be paid to all tracks in order to guarantee the comprehensive and just settlement in the region. This cannot be achieved if the settlement is partial and incomplete. My country's delegation also wishes to point out that any settlement must be accompanied by an integrated approach to enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, since the question of Palestine is at the core of the conflict in the region.

The peace process in the Middle East that began four years ago has made important progress on the road to peace, as highlighted by the accord reached in Washington, D.C., which led to the signing on 13 September 1993 of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and, on 26 October 1994, of the Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty. These agreements were in turn followed by the signing on 28 September 1995, of the Interim Agreement on the West

Bank and Gaza Strip, the second phase of the Declaration of Principles on the extension of self-government arrangements. This Agreement calls for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, thereby allowing the Palestinian people to exercise its right to hold free and democratic elections.

Optimism is the watchword of the day. It must prevail, despite the ongoing Israeli settlement policies aimed at altering the demography of the occupied Arab territories, especially in the city of Al-Quds. Bahrain welcomes all the positive developments and wishes to reaffirm its support for the peace process in the Middle East. It promises to endorse any effort to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace on the basis of the land-for-peace principle and of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) which call for Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including the Holy City of Al-Quds.

Since the Middle East peace process began, the international community has closely followed the positive developments in the question of Palestine and the Jordanian track. Unfortunately, however, no real progress has been made on the Syrian track. As we have just said, no just, lasting and comprehensive peace can be achieved without Israel's full withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan and the dismantling of settlements in accordance with the resolutions of the international community. Bahrain, therefore, wishes to reaffirm its support for Syria's position on recovering full sovereignty over its territory occupied in 1967 in the Golan Heights.

We also wish to refer here to the importance of preserving Lebanon's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally-recognized borders. We call for the activation of the peace process on the Lebanese track and urge Israel to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978) which calls for withdrawal of Israel's forces from the Lebanese territories.

Unfortunately, Israel continues to develop its nuclear programmes outside international supervision. We believe that this is an obstacle to peace, security and stability in the region and we, therefore, call upon Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to subject all its nuclear installations to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. That would help to build confidence, which is one of the underpinnings of the peace process.

The Middle East is entering upon a new era. Negotiations are underway to settle all issues among all the countries of the region within the framework of international legality. These are extremely positive developments and we therefore feel that all peace-loving countries in the Middle East must promote the peace process and help to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace on all tracks in the region.

Mr. Yaacobi (Israel): I feel obliged to begin my speech this year by referring to the brutal assassination of the Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin, less than one month ago. This event traumatized the State of Israel and sent shock waves throughout the entire Middle East and the whole world. Israel lost a leader, a man who devoted his life to the defence of the State of Israel. He will be remembered as a soldier who fell in the battle for peace.

Despite the pain of Rabin's assassination, the people of Israel and the Government of Prime Minister Peres are determined to push forward and achieve a comprehensive regional peace in the Middle East. We will not allow terrorists from any quarter to stop the peace process. This is our commitment.

We have been travelling long in our search for peace. The policies that Yitzhak Rabin's Government pursued led to dramatic breakthroughs in Israel's relationships with its neighbours. The ultimate achievement was the signing of the Declaration of Principles with the PLO on 13 September 1993. The process which began on that date represents the best, perhaps the only, opportunity the peoples of our region have for peaceful coexistence. When Israel and the Palestinians signed the Declaration of Principles, we chose to reshape our future by taking history into our own hands. We chose to transform decades of conflict into a new era of peace and cooperation.

The subsequent agreements reached by Israel and the Palestinians — the Gaza-Jericho Agreement and the Interim Agreement, Oslo B — are forging a new reality in the Middle East. Another significant event was the signing of a peace treaty with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in October 1994. Israel now has working relations with other Arab and Muslim States in North Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

At this time, I would like to reiterate the invitation issued at this rostrum less than two months ago by then Foreign Minister, now Prime Minister, Shimon Peres:

> "I would like to use this occasion to turn to the Syrians and to turn to the Lebanese and ask them to stop hesitating, to stop wandering ... Experience has shown that through negotiation on all levels, embracing all issues without timidity, without fatigue, we can achieve peace." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 14th meeting, pp. 4 and 5)*

Syria and Lebanon need peace as much as Israel and the rest of the Middle East. Peace will allow them and us to invest in people instead of weapons; in security instead of war; in economy and development instead of confrontation. There is no way other than through direct negotiations at the decision-making level. This is how peace was achieved with Egypt and Jordan; this is how understanding and agreements were achieved with the PLO. If Syria follows this course, peace will be achieved.

The international community should give expression to and voice its support for the changes in the Middle East. We support very much the draft resolution on the Middle East peace process proposed by Norway, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. At the same time, Israel will continue to oppose attempts to bring to this body issues that should be discussed bilaterally between the parties themselves, as was concluded at the Madrid Conference.

We believe that the peace that we are recreating with our neighbours will translate into full regional cooperation. Last year a process of extensive regional economic cooperation began with the convening, in Casablanca, of the first Middle East/North Africa economic summit, under the auspices of His Majesty King Hassan of Morocco. Last month a second summit was held in Amman, under the auspices of His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan. Two thousand participants came from 61 countries, including most of the countries of the Middle East and many Muslim countries outside our region.

The goals of the summit, as outlined in the Amman Declaration, were

> "to facilitate the expansion of private-sector investment in the region, to cement a public-private partnership which will ensure that end, and to work to enhance regional cooperation and development."

At the summit, business leaders from Israel, many Arab States and Muslim States outside the region concluded a number of projects that will

> "help augment the productive capacity of the region and contribute to its broad-based economic development."

Government representatives agreed to establish in Cairo, Egypt, a Bank for Economic Cooperation and Development in the Middle East and North Africa. Next year's economic summit will be held in Cairo, and the following one in Qatar.

Peace and development are leading us to a better future. Those who are trapped in the past punish future generations and deprive them of peace and prosperity. In the long run, we believe, regional cooperation is the best way. I believe that the opportunities for regional cooperation are great. Through regional cooperation, we can gradually work towards a Middle East common market. Through regional cooperation, we can establish a coordinated network of infrastructure, including ports, airports, railways and energy plants, electricity grids, phone networks and computer communications. Through regional cooperation, we are opening borders for tourism. Not only can open tourism create hundreds of thousands of jobs; it can create built-in interests to preserve peace.

The path before us is difficult, but our destination is clear: peace and security, cooperation and prosperity. Israel, Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinians, together with other Middle Eastern and Maghreb countries, are already working together. The international community must help to ensure that this is the future of the Middle East.

Prior experience has taught us that agreements between leaders are not enough, and that peace means more than just the absence of war. We have always believed that a peaceful environment will enable all countries in the region to divert their human energies and economic resources away from conflict and towards better education, health, human progress, science, technology and economic development.

Peace and stability will not only save lives and money; they will generate growth. Shifts from military to civilian expenditure will create economic and human progress. And the threat of war will no longer deter foreign investment and tourism. We can divert $30 billion annually away from armaments and other costs of conflict in the Middle East. This money can be better spent on education and health and on human and economic development.

Israel feels that the United Nations has an important role to play in fostering the bilateral agreements and in promoting multilateral projects. Israel has been cooperating fully with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the United Nations Children's Fund, and with other international organizations as well, in implementing programmes aimed at improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza. We welcome and encourage their continued participation.

During the last three years we have seen a positive change in United Nations resolutions referring to the Middle East, the most important of which is the resolution regarding the Middle East peace process which was presented today. But there are still resolutions that are contrary to the new reality in the region. We expect that the States Members of the United Nations will eliminate these anachronistic resolutions from the General Assembly's agenda. The time has come to refrain from the rhetoric of years gone by.

In his address to the Special Meeting of the General Assembly commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the late Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin, said:

> "We are grateful to the international community for its encouragement at this historic moment which is unfolding on our little plot of land ...
>
> "The road is still long. However, we are determined to continue until we have brought peace to the region, for our children and our children's children and for all the peoples of the region. This is our mission. We will fulfil it." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 39th meeting, p. 26)*

Yitzhak Rabin gave his life in pursuit of this vision.

It is our obligation to continue on this course. Israel's new Government, headed by Prime Minister Shimon Peres, is committed to peace and will continue to work in its pursuit. This is our policy; this is our hope. It has to be the obligation and the goal of the entire international community.

Mr. Al-Ameire (United Arab Emirates) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I have pleasure in thanking the Secretary-General for the way in which he has strengthened and increased the effectiveness of the role of the United Nations in promoting peace and security in the Middle East region.

The fact that the General Assembly is considering the situation in the Middle East today, under agenda item 44, reaffirms the international community's resolve to give momentum to the peace process in the region and to ensure the achievement of its objectives, in keeping with the changes that have taken place in the region and on the international scene.

Although about four years have now passed since the peace process began in Madrid with the aim of achieving comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East region, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and the land-for-peace principle, it is rather disappointing that the peace process has not made any progress on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks because of the Israeli Government's reneging on the commitments it took upon itself at the Madrid Conference and its disregard for the realities of the present situation in the region.

The United Arab Emirates which welcomed the convening of the Madrid Peace Conference and took part in the multilateral negotiations, has followed closely the four tracks of the Arab-Israeli negotiations and has welcomed the signing of the Declaration of Principles on self-government and the subsequent agreements between the Palestinian National Authority and Israel as well as the signing of the Peace Treaty between Jordan and Israel. At the same time, we find that the achievement of a comprehensive and just peaceful settlement in the Middle East region requires progress in the negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

From this rostrum, my country reiterates its support of the just and legitimate positions of the Syrian and Lebanese Governments in their quest to regain their occupied territories in the Syrian Golan and southern Lebanon on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions and the land-for-peace principle. My Government also considers that all the steps and measures taken by the Israeli occupation authorities with the aim of altering the legal status and demographic character of the Palestinian and Arab occupied territories, particularly with regard to Al-Quds, are null and void and constitute a serious breach of international law.

Peace, security, stability and development in the Middle East require the elimination of all weapons of

mass destruction in the region, including nuclear weapons. Proceeding from this, the United Arab Emirates calls upon Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to place all its nuclear facilities under the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as a confidence-building step in the region. We also reaffirm the importance of a continued role by the United Nations and its specialized agencies in the peace process and call upon Israel to honour its commitments under relevant resolutions of international legality in the interests of a better future of peace, tolerance, human development and economic and social development in the region.

Mr. Alakwaa (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): In his statement in the General Assembly on 11 October 1995, my country's Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that:

> "just and lasting peace will remain contingent upon complete Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, particularly the Syrian Golan and South Lebanon, in accordance with United Nations resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1972) and 425 (1978) and in line with the principle of land for peace". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 28th meeting, p. 15)*

Although we fully support the progress made and the success achieved by the peace process so far on the other Arab and Israeli tracks, we continue to believe that it is extremely important and necessary to make similar progress on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

In the interests of brevity, I shall limit my statement to the two subjects to which the Secretary-General refers in his report (A/50/574), namely the status of the Syrian Golan Heights and the city of Al-Quds.

With regard to the Syrian Golan, Israel's continued occupation of that region is a flagrant and clear breach of the norms of international law, in particular the Hague Convention of 1907 and its relevant Annexes and the terms of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. That continuing occupation is also a violation of Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and of the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of the land of others by force.

With regard to the status of Al-Quds, Israel's declaration that that City is Israel's eternal capital is in conflict with Security Council resolution 478 (1980), which decided not to recognize either Israel's "basic law" or the changes made by Israel with regard to the character and status of Al-Quds.

We agree with the Secretary-General's view that these two questions remain urgent. In our opinion the international community must shoulder its responsibilities and remain committed to finding a solution to the two questions in a manner that will take into account both justice and the rights of all the parties. Member States as well as the States directly concerned are legally committed to maintaining their embassies where they are currently located and not to transfer them to Al-Quds. We appeal to those States that have already made such transfers to withdraw their embassies from that City until an agreement is reached between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Government of Israel on the final status of the City of Al-Quds.

Mr. Razali (Malaysia): In the statement of the Malaysian delegation two days ago on the question of Palestine, we, along with others, welcomed the positive developments that have taken place in that region, specifically in the occupied Palestinian territories.

As a result of the courageous and forward-looking decisions of leaders in the region, and with active encouragement from the international community, major milestones have been achieved in the Middle East peace process. The Palestinian-Israeli and Jordan-Israeli agreements demonstrate the continuing commitment of the parties to promoting peace in the Middle East. We hope that these encouraging developments will generate momentum for progress on the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks of the Middle East peace talks, leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Mutual agreement between Israel and the other two Arab countries is another essential prerequisite for peace in the Middle East. In this regard, we share these views expressed by the Secretary-General in his report:

> "Hope has been generated by these encouraging signs that progress can be accelerated in the Israeli-Lebanese and Israeli-Syrian negotiations leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978)." *(A/50/1, para. 739)*

The Malaysian delegation welcomes the agreement reached between the late Prime Minister of Israel and

President Assad of Syria in June 1995 on the next steps to be taken to move the Syrian-Israeli track to a new and more intensive phase. In our view, maintaining the dialogue between the parties concerned, with the support of the international community, is an important contribution to peace. It is also our hope that such dialogue will lead to the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the occupied Syrian Golan, consistent with Security Council resolution 497 (1981).

My delegation remains concerned over the various acts of violence and the hostilities perpetrated in southern Lebanon, which have led to many casualties among civilians. While recognizing that the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has to a certain extent contributed to stability in the area, we affirm that peace can only endure if the return of the effective authority of the Lebanese Government in the area where the Israeli forces remain in Lebanon is ensured. Any policy of neutralizing areas outside one's own territory by way of ensuring one's own security, which is a mind-set of the past, is clearly unacceptable.

In his statement two days ago to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the President of the General Assembly stated that the attainment of political, economic and social justice by the Palestinian people was essential to the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The Malaysian delegation completely supports this point of view. It is unconscionable to consider projects and plans for the advancement of the region while the Palestinians encounter serious obstacles in alleviating their economic and social situation. The Palestinian issue remains the crux of the Middle East problem. In this connection the steps currently under way must lead to the establishment of a Palestinian homeland and a durable solution to the question of the status of Jerusalem.

In our statement last year on this item, we emphasized that peace in the Middle East must mean the flowering of development, the full expression of rights, the empowerment of the people, and commitments to equity and social justice. To achieve this, there is a need for effective, collective and forthcoming international assistance. Recent efforts by the leaders in the region to promote development, especially through enhanced trade and economic ties involving the private sector and private capital flows, should be welcomed by the international community.

In many ways the Middle East has remained one of the few parts of the world still suffering from a lack of development. The reason is obvious. However, with the historic breakthroughs for peace in the last two years, there are real and serious prospects for change. Indeed current developments there have demonstrated that no issue is intractable and that no issue is beyond solution. We hope that Israel will take this golden opportunity to forge lasting ties with its Arab neighbours by resolving the outstanding obstacles to genuine, just and lasting peace. The tragic loss of its leader, Yitzhak Rabin, sacrificed at the altar of peace, should consolidate commitment to further steps on the road towards peace and security, which will enhance the prospects for progress and the development of the region.

As in the past, Malaysia will support any process that will advance and realize the achievement of a solution to the Middle East conflict, one that will bring lasting peace, security and stability to all countries in the region in line with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The changes that have been taking place on the international scene since the early 1990s, despite their magnitude and their far-reaching implications, cannot change the principles and moral values that mankind has endeavoured to live by since the dawn of history. Right cannot become wrong overnight; equality cannot become hegemony; racism cannot become a virtue and the occupation of land of others cannot acquire legitimacy.

In the wake of those changes, and following the end of the cold war, the peoples of the world have come to attach great hope to the United Nations because the Organization, with its Charter and its lofty principles, represents in their eyes a strong guarantee of international peace and security and the means of putting an end to aggression and occupation.

Our region is the cradle of the three revealed religions. It is also the cradle of human civilization. Our roots run deep in our region. Syria is an important part of the Arab nation; it is an ancient land, proud of its history and proud of its civilization. By accepting in 1973 Security Council resolution 338 (1973), which rested on the foundation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), Syria had opened the door to peace. Ever since, there have been efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region that would restore land and rights. There have been several initiatives in the interests of

peace, some by individuals and some by States. All those initiatives have foundered, however, on the Israeli position which rejected peace on the basis of international legality and the resolutions of the United Nations.

Finally, there has been the United States peace initiative, which reaffirmed the principle of land for peace, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). As specified in the guarantees and safeguards the United States presented to Syria, the United States stated that, in conformity with an earlier United States position that rejected the application of Israeli law to the Golan, it does not agree to the annexation by Israel of a single inch of territory in the Golan Heights which have been occupied since 1967.

It was on that basis that we participated in the Madrid conference. We contributed to the discussions that preceded the Madrid Conference and led to the convening of that Conference. Syria was the first to submit the first written paper, a document the United States has described as historic. It was Syria also that proposed the principle of land for peace, and the concept of total peace for total withdrawal. But Israel has exploited the negotiations for procrastination and for evading the requirements of peace, and has attempted to use the negotiations to impose its own conditions which have continued to be in conflict with the letter and the spirit of the relevant Security Council resolutions. We had expected Israel to understand that Syria's desire for peace does not mean that Syria would let go of a single inch of territory, or of an iota of its national sovereignty over that territory.

Four years have now passed since the convening of the Madrid Conference without just and comprehensive peace having been established in the Middle East. Recent developments have shown that Israel does not seek a true, just and comprehensive peace that would put an end to conflict, to occupation or to settlement — a peace that would guarantee security and stability for all.

Rather, the main focus of Israel is on trying to reach agreements that would detract from sovereignty and dignity, and would evade the principle of land for peace in pursuit of Israel's dream of hegemony and domination, agreements that would never guarantee the restoration of rights, especially with regard to the liberation of land and the exercise of self-determination.

All agreements that have been concluded throughout history on any other basis than balance, equality, equity and the respect of basic rights of all parties have never been anything but temporary truces. Those who would pursue the annals of history would find that this has been the sort of terrain wherein all unbalanced and unequal treaties find their burial ground and final resting place.

Economic peace cannot see the light of day in the absence of complete, comprehensive and just peace between the Arabs and Israel on all tracks. Any political or economic peace cannot engender stability or security unless the question of Al-Quds is definitely settled in a manner that would restore the Holy City to what it has always been: Arab; unless Israel withdraws from the Golan and the remaining occupied Arab territories to the lines of 4 June 1967, as well as from all the occupied Lebanese territories, and unless the refugees are enabled to return to their homeland, in line with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The essence of the conflict has never been, and will never be a problem that has to do with what types of cooperation should exist between Israel and the Arabs. Essentially, it is a conflict that has to do with occupation, aggression, expansion, the appropriation of land and the displacement of Arab civilians.

Syria has no conditions for the achievement of peace other than the implementation of the resolutions of international legality, putting an end to occupation, and the return of the Syrian Golan — which has been Syrian since the dawn of history — to its legitimate owners, those who have been displaced by Israel as a result of Israel's occupation, whose numbers today have reached half a million Syrians who have been forced to migrate and were displaced from the cities and villages of the Golan into the inner parts of Syria and who still await the opportunity to go back to their homes and to retrieve their property in order to be able to resume a natural life. The time has come for the refugees and the displaced persons to go back to their homes and to be compensated for the losses they have suffered.

The question of arms limitation in the Middle East will become more accessible and more effective if it is based on the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, in particular, nuclear weapons, according to criteria which are not biased in favour of one State at the expense of all others. Disarmament must encompass all the countries in the region without exception, within the framework of the United Nations and under its supervision.

Syria has acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and has signed the safeguards agreement emanating from this Treaty. Syria has also signed the Convention on prohibition of biological weapons and has constantly supported the initiative seeking to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone. During the Paris Conference of 1989 on biological weapons, Syria was the first to officially propose making the Middle East region a zone free of weapons of mass destruction — that is, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Meanwhile, Israel, whom everyone knows is the only State in the region that possesses the nuclear weapon — in addition to the fact that Israel also possesses other weapons of mass destruction — has refused to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It has also refused to place its nuclear installations and facilities to the safeguards regime during past decades and up till now, whereas the only logical choice for all peoples of the world, is to achieve security for all through complete nuclear disarmament and the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

To enable Israel to stockpile huge arsenals of sophisticated and destructive weapons cannot be the real guarantee for the security of Israel so long as Israel continues to occupy the lands of others by force, and so long as it continues to violate the rights of the Palestinian people. Those in Israel who believe that it is possible to achieve complete peace without Israel's total withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories are sadly mistaken, because such withdrawal, in conformity with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as Security Council 425 (1978) is a fundamental prerequisite for peace.

The road to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace is well-charted and well-understood. We are with the peace process, but we shall never engage in something that we do not believe in. Neither can we embark on anything which is contrary to our national interests and beliefs. If the conditions which provide comprehensive and just peace are there, then we shall support such peace, because we are resolved to wage the battle for peace to the very end. We cannot retract or renege as far as our position is concerned, but we cannot bargain away our rights on our land. Our rights and our claims are legitimate, and they are supported by international law and by the United Nations resolutions.

Our cause is just. It is supported by our Arab people and by the international community. We should like to reaffirm in this respect the concomitance of the Syrian and Lebanese tracks with regard to the achievement of peace — peace that would restore occupied lands and guarantee rights and preserve dignity on both tracks.

As we speak of the importance of accelerating negotiations or discussions on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks on the basis of the principles and the constants upon which the peace process was established, this leads us to reaffirm the fact that peace has been and will continue to be Syria's strategic option. The peace process cannot be built on a unilateral position. The other party has to be positive in dealing with all the given factors and all the elements and foundations of the serious and constructive positions proposed by Syria.

Syria cannot accept any symbol of occupation on its territory. Syria cannot accept anything less than full withdrawal from the Syrian Golan, and cannot accept anything less than equal security arrangements and parallel security arrangements, because the peace after which we aspire is peace that would guarantee the rights of every party and would be in the interest of all parties. It should be the sort of peace that would usher in, for the whole region, an era of stability and security. For us, full withdrawal from the Syrian Golan is the key to the peace process in its entirety.

We are optimistic as far as the future is concerned. Peace that does not come today will arrive tomorrow. That is the peace we strive for in order for our region to move from the state of war to a state of peace — peace that would give to each his rights; peace that would put an end to occupation and to the bloodshed of innocents while preserving the dignity of man; peace that would bring prosperity to the region and enable both Arabs and Israelis to live in security, stability and prosperity.

Finally, I should like to refer here to the draft resolution on the Syrian Golan under agenda item 44 on the situation in the Middle East. The draft resolution was adopted by the Arab Group and has been submitted as an Arab text. It is our hope that the draft resolution will gain the widest possible support.

Mr. Ateba (Cameroon) *(interpretation from French):* As we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we must emphasize that one of the longest-standing challenges facing the Organization is the situation that arose in the Middle East almost half a century ago. Since then, the international community has been constantly striving to establish just and lasting peace throughout that region.

After three wars and many skirmishes and other confrontations which had given rise to widespread tension, in turn compounded by the inflexibility of the various parties involved, no glimmer of hope seemed visible on the horizon. In this context, all the resolutions adopted on the matter by the United Nations, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), remained dead letters.

This is the Gordian knot that the international community, thanks to the goodwill of certain authorities in the countries of the region, has been working to untangle since the Madrid Conference in 1991.

Cameroon accordingly hails the tremendous vision and courage that the Israeli Government and the leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization have displayed in their resolve to secure the peace that has been sought for so long.

The Cameroonian delegation would like once again to pay a tribute to the memory of the late, lamented Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin. This martyr for peace, whose passing was marked in Cameroon by a day of national mourning, made the peace process embarked on in the Middle East possible and credible.

Cameroon supports this process and welcomes the historic developments in that part of the world resulting from the signing of the Oslo and Washington agreements in 1993. The Washington agreement, which related to interim arrangements for Palestinian self-government made it possible to establish a Palestinian Authority in Gaza and Jericho and also to begin the process of the transfer of powers in the occupied territories. Cameroon has ties of friendship and cooperation with both the signatories and with the other countries of the region, and it urges the two parties to comply, as far as possible, with the timetable for implementation in order, among other things, to keep extremist acts on all sides to a minimum. In this respect, the signing on 28 September 1995 at Washington of the Interim Agreement on extending self-rule to the towns and territories of the West Bank, in implementation of the second phase of the application of the Declaration of Principles, confirms the resolve of the Israeli Government and the Palestinian National Authority to achieve their objective of peace.

Cameroon believes that in order to enable the embryo Palestinian entity to establish its authority on a firm basis, the international community must grant it support and assistance. For this reason, we support the work of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza. My country welcomes the fact that the momentum of the peace process embarked upon by Israel and Palestine is carrying over into other parts of the region. In this respect, the agreement concluded this year between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Israel encourages Cameroon in its conviction that comprehensive peace is achievable in the Middle East. It is hardly necessary to point out that just and lasting peace will be possible only if the legitimate interests of all the parties are taken into account.

Thus, Cameroon encourages the Israeli and Syrian Governments to begin negotiations as soon as possible to find a solution to the question of the Syrian Golan that is acceptable to everyone. Furthermore, the question of South Lebanon, too, can be solved only through direct negotiations between the Israeli and Lebanese authorities. My country calls on them to embark upon such negotiations with a view to concluding a peace agreement.

It goes without saying that the continuing tense situation in the Middle East makes it impossible for that region, the cradle of the monotheistic religions and of civilization, to derive full benefit from its rich potential. When peace is restored, it will once again become, we are sure, a showcase of the world's treasures.

The peoples of the Middle East, now strongly motivated by a resolve to achieve peace, must bury the hatchet of war once and for all and tackle the priority tasks of economic and social development.

Mr. Abu-Nimah (Jordan) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: The situation in the Middle East, with its core issue, the question of Palestine, continues to be an important item on the agenda of the international community as represented by this Organization. My delegation's participation in this debate stems from its firmly held belief in the vital role of the United Nations and in the need for the Organization to participate in the ongoing peace process. After all, the United Nations is the major bastion of international legality and the collective conscience of mankind. It was in the framework of the United Nations that the international community conceived and adopted most of the resolutions which contain the principles, elements and provisions that constitute the foundations of the settlement of the Middle East problem: the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The most telling proof of this fact is that

Security Council resolution 242 (1967) is the linchpin of the current peace process. It was that resolution 242 which opened the door towards peace back in 1967. Once the resolution is fully implemented in letter and in spirit on all tracks, and once the legitimate national and political rights of the Palestinian people have been attained, then we shall have succeeded, God willing, in establishing just, permanent and comprehensive peace in the region.

The situation in the Middle East, the question of Palestine and the question of peace in general are of primary concern to Jordan, whose track record since 1948 in those areas is well-known. Our policy in international relations is anchored in the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore, we firmly believe in the principle of peaceful settlement of all international disputes, at all times and under all circumstances. Accordingly, as soon as the opportunity arose to address in earnest the conflict in the Middle East, my country moved expeditiously, as an active participant, to seize and ensure the success of the historic opportunity afforded by the Madrid Conference. That was indeed the first genuine turning-point in the history of that conflict. Our position on this has been characterized by the same positive spirit Jordan has demonstrated towards all the endeavours which aimed, throughout the long years of conflict, to arrive at a peaceful settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Jordan's concept of peace is that peace should be just, lasting and comprehensive. This is a concept that is in harmony with the outlook of all other parties to the conflict. Our commitment to peace, in the context of that concept, is both strategic and a matter of principle. It is based on our conviction that peace is, *inter alia*, an essential need for all the countries and peoples of the region. Once attained, peace would represent a major turning-point in the modern history of the region. It also would provide a solid basis for the prospects of stability and security for, and coexistence amongst, all countries of the region. Peace, in the final analysis, would give the peoples of the region the hope of leading a normal life, which has been denied them for some five decades.

Against this conceptual backdrop, my country concluded, on 26 October 1994, a Peace Treaty with Israel. The Treaty ensured the return of rights to their legitimate owners, rectified anomalies, turned a new leaf of good-neighbourliness between the two countries and established guidelines, in various spheres, for future relations and cooperation. The Jordan-Israel Treaty represents a significant step on the path towards the comprehensive peace sought by the negotiating partners and the international community as a whole — all the more so since our Treaty came as a follow-up to the peace accords reached with the Arab Republic of Egypt and the great progress achieved on the Palestinian-Israeli track.

Proceeding from this, we feel that all parties to the peace negotiations should persist in their efforts to reach a comprehensive peace. Meanwhile, efforts should be intensified, in a sincere and fair manner, with a view to consolidating the foundations of a viable peace. Clearly, these issues include the questions of refugees and displaced persons, Arab Al-Quds, settlements, sovereignty and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. It is also clear that comprehensive peace requires progress, which means reaching agreement on both the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks.

Without peace with Syria and Lebanon on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and in accordance with the "land for peace" formula, adopted as a basis for peace between the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, then a comprehensive peace will remain elusive and the peace arrangements made so far will remain incomplete and inadequate. It is also clear that the only guarantee of curbing the whirlpool of violence which targets the cause of peace in the region, that violence whose grave dangers we are aware of and which we condemn and reject, is to achieve further progress in the peace process.

The question of Al-Quds remains the key to a just peace. Thus a fair and balanced solution to this issue is bound to be extremely helpful. Any accord on Al-Quds should not ignore the fact that there is an overall international consensus, at virtually all legal and political levels, that East Al-Quds is part and parcel of the West Bank, which was occupied in 1967. Therefore, it is subject to the terms and conditions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and to the relevant Security Council resolutions. In point of fact, the Security Council itself accorded a special status to Al-Quds since its occupation by Israel. Resolution 252 (1968) is quite unequivocal in that respect, as it rejects all Israeli measures and legislation aimed at changing the status, the demographic composition or the topographical features of the city. Security Council resolution 476 (1980) expressly called for ending the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories occupied in 1967, including the city of Al-Quds. Resolution 478 (1980), which calls on States not to move their diplomatic missions to the Holy City, is perhaps the most significant example of international insistence on rejecting Israel's annexation of Al-Quds. Therefore, that

annexation was, and still is, contrary to the basic principles of international law, since Arab Al-Quds is an occupied territory subject to the rules of international law, including Security Council resolutions and the Geneva Conventions.

We realize that the Palestinian-Israeli accords deferred consideration of the status of Al-Quds to the final stage of negotiations, in view of the special importance, complexity and difficulty of this issue. It is hoped also that this delay would set aside a thorny matter in the interest of ensuring the strong and smooth start-up of the peace process, which would lay the groundwork for confidence-building between the two sides and reinforce their conviction that peace could be achieved. All that, it was assumed, would be conducive to an even-handed and satisfactory resolution of the issue in due course. Therefore, any measure taken by Israel since Madrid to change or amend the legal, political or demographic structure of Al-Quds would be tantamount to creating new realities on the ground, and would represent a *fait accompli* that would be imposed on the Arab side at the final phase of negotiations.

In the same vein, needless to say, similar actions, such as the recent decision by the American Congress to move the United States Embassy to Al-Quds, would have a serious and negative impact on the negotiations. In fact, this would constitute an a priori ruling on the status of the Holy City well before the start of negotiations on its final status. Such a development is certainly harmful to the peace process as a whole. It does not serve the long-term interests of the peoples of the region or their aspirations after a common future built on stability, cooperation, respect and understanding. Therefore, we condemn that decision and stress that it is null and void, as it runs counter to the relevant United Nations resolutions and to the official American positions. Furthermore, that decision endangers the peace process as a whole and might, indeed, bring about its collapse. Accordingly, we call upon the American administration to adhere to its declared position, which is contrary to Congress's decision on this matter.

I take this opportunity to inform you, Sir, that my country is aware that deferring discussion on Al-Quds requires the maintenance of the status quo pending the forthcoming final stage of the negotiations. Thus, in the interest of preserving the religious, cultural and historical character of the Holy City, the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has unfailingly looked after the holy sites by providing maintenance and conservation work. My Government has also provided support to the keepers of those shrines, with a view to ensuring their safety and protection in the face of any potential threat pending a final resolution of the issue.

It is in the same spirit and within the same context that we should be addressing the two other questions of refugees and settlements. Here again, the deferment of the discussion of those questions was due to their overall weight and significance and to the need to ensure a forceful and pace-setting beginning to the peace process in its initial stages. A satisfactory settlement of these questions on the basis of United Nations resolutions and the principles of international law is a *sine qua non* for building a just, comprehensive and viable peace that would be embraced by current and future generations in the whole region. In this regard, may I recall what His Majesty King Hussein said before the United States Congress in July 1994:

(spoke in English)

> "It should never be forgotten that peace resides ultimately not in the hands of Governments, but in the hands of the people. For unless peace can be made real to the men, women and children of the Middle East, the best efforts of negotiators will come to nought".

(spoke in Arabic)

From our point of view, we believe that the international community has a substantial responsibility to fulfil towards the promotion and success of the peace process. True, peace must be entrenched and defended by peoples. But peace transcends abstract concepts; it also means tangible dividends. That is why my country is seeking a larger and deeper international understanding of the economic, developmental and financial needs of our peoples, with a view to consolidating peace throughout the region. And herein lies the significance of the recent economic summits held in Casablanca and of late in Amman with a view to draw up and refine a regional economic development blueprint. The results of the Amman Economic Summit were very promising indeed. We trust that the next economic summit, which will be hosted by Egypt, would build on the achievements made so far. Moral and verbal support of the peace process are not adequate for shielding peace and moving the process forward. That is why we believe that the United Nations, the representative of international legality, has a vital role to play through expansion of its programmes and operational activities in the countries of the region.

Proceeding from all this, my delegation hopes that the draft resolution regarding the Middle East settlement, as well as the two draft resolutions related to Al-Quds and the Syrian Golan will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Poernomo (Indonesia): Earlier this week the General Assembly had the opportunity to consider the agenda item entitled "Question of Palestine". On that occasion, Member States that participated in the debate reaffirmed that this question constitutes the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, with profound ramifications on the Middle East landscape as a whole, which we are considering today. The debate further made clear that progress achieved through the Palestinian-Israeli track could not by itself constitute a panacea for other problems afflicting the region, for, over the decades, there has emerged an intricate web of interrelated issues involving other States in the region which needs to be untangled if a just, lasting and a comprehensive peace is to be achieved.

Fortunately, however, the road map and the major aspects of a definitive peace settlement have already been traced out in various resolutions adopted by the United Nations. These call, *inter alia*, for Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories, including Jerusalem, respect for the right of all States in the region to peacefully coexist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, and recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and statehood, and exercise of those rights by them.

It is undeniable that at this critical stage in the ongoing peace endeavours we need yet another series of breakthroughs on other aspects of the Middle East question which have for so long frustrated and indeed paralysed the peace process. It has been our hope that the positive spillover effect of the historic Declaration of Principles of 1993, as evident in the progress subsequently achieved in the Israeli-Jordanian track of negotiations, will be replicated in the other dimensions of the Arab-Israeli dispute. The progress achieved in the Palestinian-Israeli and Jordanian-Israeli tracks has shown that barriers to obstacles can be overcome and commitment to peace can be achieved through dialogue and negotiations rather than through resorting to violence and war, with their attendant consequences.

Given the central role of the Palestinian question in the Middle East equation, it is not surprising that the milestone achieved in the Palestinian-Israeli track has had its inevitable reverberations throughout the region. The recent Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip has paved the way towards the realization of the cherished aspirations of the Palestinian people by, among others, widening the areas of Palestinian self-government, laying down modalities for the holding of elections to the Palestinian legislative body, and allowing for negotiations on the final status of Jerusalem. Of no less importance are provisions relating to the withdrawal of Israeli forces, legal issues, allocation of water resources, religious sites, human rights, economy, environment, and science and technology.

It is gratifying to note that the transformation in relations between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel has been extended to those between Israel and Jordan, which culminated in the treaty of peace between them. This momentous agreement terminated the state of war and paved the way towards the establishment of diplomatic relations between them. We note that during the past year relations between them have been further consolidated, to the mutual benefit of their peoples.

However, the hope generated by these historic developments that progress can be also achieved in the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese negotiations, leading to a comprehensive and just peace based on the framework of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) have not yet materialized. My delegation notes with concern that despite laudable efforts by the Government of Syria progress towards ending the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights has been stagnant. It is also particularly regrettable that Israel persists in carrying out periodic raids against Lebanon, which have caused immense suffering to its defenceless civilians. The international community has repeatedly condemned such acts as a flagrant violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity which cannot but have a detrimental impact on the cause of peace in the region.

Ever since the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the United Nations has been seized of this question and has historically taken a principled position aimed at bringing about genuine peace in the region. At this critical juncture, my delegation deems it essential for the Organization not only to maintain but also to increase its role, both politically and economically, in the peace process. Its potential for contributing to these endeavours and for resolving the key issues involved must be fully harnessed. Given the enormous number of tasks, the role of the Organization remains crucial in resolving the Middle East conflict.

Indonesia looks forward to the day when Arab-Israeli relations will no longer claim the attention of the international community because of their potential threat to global peace and security, but, rather, because of their contribution to the betterment of the region as a whole and the well-being of its people. We should therefore seize the unprecedented opportunity now before us and marshal our collective commitment to bringing the ongoing endeavours to the point of irreversibility in history. The hopes and interests of the people of the Middle East and, indeed, of all the world, call for the achievement of true peace, common security and generalized prosperity.

Mr. Allagany (Saudi Arabia) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The General Assembly discusses today the question of the Middle East which is currently witnessing the beginnings of a new era in the contemporary history of a region that has seen many wars and conflicts. International cooperation has resulted in moving forward the Middle East peace process which was launched at the Peace Conference on the Middle East in Madrid. Although the process has not yet reached its final goal, the opportunity is still there to give it momentum, especially on the Lebanese and the Syrian tracks. Four years have now passed since the convening of the Peace Conference in Madrid. The Conference sought a just and lasting peace in the region, based on the principle of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), resolution 252 (1968) on Holy Jerusalem, and resolution 425 (1978) on southern Lebanon. The principle and formula of "land for peace" still await definition of what is meant by "land", and the principle of "withdrawal" is still being obfuscated by the term "redeployment" and by Israel's demands for ending the boycott without guarantees for the return of all the occupied territories, in addition to other demands that would focus the multilateral negotiations on supplementary issues, while the main issues remain suspended and frozen.

My country still follows up the developments of the peace process in the Middle East, both on the bilateral and the multilateral levels with very keen interest. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has continued to stand by this process since its initiation in 1991 in Madrid. Such stand reflects the sincerity of Arab orientations and intentions in the pursuit of a just and comprehensive peace in the region. We have repeatedly stressed that multilateral negotiations constitute a part of the peace process which started in Madrid, and is not a substitute for it.

Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the first of the two Qiblas, and the third of the holy shrines, will always remain at the centre of attention by the Arab and the Muslim worlds. The manner in which this question is handled will determine the future of the peace process in its entirety. The current tendency in the negotiations to defer the discussion of the question of Al-Quds to the final stage of the peace negotiations creates some sort of duplication between, on the one hand, the imposition of a *fait accompli* and, on the other, the attempt to afford the peace process the opportunity of creating a climate of confidence. We say this because we witness the persistence of Israeli authorities in taking a series of measures with the aim of introducing demographic and institutional changes designed to change the status of Al-Quds and, thereby, to influence in advance the negotiations which are to be held later with the aim of determining the final status of the Holy City.

We cannot believe or imagine that the peace process would be able to continue to progress automatically. Rather, we believe that all parties concerned are required to give greater momentum and more drive to the negotiations in view of the fact that the extensive support the peace process has attracted so far has been linked in people's minds with increasing expectations regarding the full return of lands and restoration of rights, side by side with the initiation of regional cooperation in the areas of arms limitation and the development of the economies of the region's countries. Effective progress on the Lebanese and Syrian tracks must guarantee the return of Syria's full sovereignty over the Golan Heights and guarantee also full implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) on withdrawal from the occupied Lebanese South.

My Government believes that it is necessary to renounce the concepts of hegemony and military superiority as well as the concept of occupying territories as a means of achieving security. We reaffirm that comprehensive peace is the effective and real guarantee of the security of all parties. The possession of nuclear weapons by one of the countries of the Middle East is, in itself, a spectre that threatens the stability and the security of the whole region and increases the possibility of the proliferation of those weapons to other countries in the region. Therefore, engagement by Israel in serious negotiations on nuclear disarmament and acceptance by Israel to place its nuclear installations under international guarantees, in addition to its accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) are extremely vital requirements. It is our hope that Israel is going to speed up the adoption of practical and tangible steps to build confidence in this respect.

The United Nations has done much to promote peace since the establishment of the Organization at a very critical juncture of history. Therefore, the United Nations has sought to spare man the scourge of war and has opened the road before the national liberation forces in the world. The future of the United Nations today depends, more than at any other time, on its ability to influence events in the world. It depends on how much the United Nations can affect the creation of the facts of tomorrow in an age where changes and developments overtake one another.

Having said this, we hope that we shall be able soon to look upon the United Nations documents on the Middle East conflict as reference works for the study of history. Until this happens, the United Nations will continue to bear a moral, legal and political responsibility to find a just and comprehensive settlement to the Middle East conflict. Such a settlement will create a new reality that would usher in a new era of stability, prosperity and fruitful cooperation for all the countries of the region.

Mr. Çelem (Turkey): Last year and the year before, my predecessors began their statements on this same agenda item with a tribute to the two architects of the Middle East peace process: President Arafat and Prime Minister Rabin. This year, I was prepared to follow suit and to do so joyfully. However, the grievous loss of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin obliges me to be restrained. We hope and believe that his legacy will help nurture the peace process.

Still, recognizing that the enemies of peace in the Middle East do not hesitate to engage in violence to hamper the transition to a new and peaceful order, we believe that all acts aiming at undermining the peace process, particularly acts of terrorism and violence, should be combated. We believe that terrorism is a scourge of our age and calls for a collective response. No country in the Middle East or other parts of the world can remain indifferent to this threat to peace, security and stability. Unwavering international cooperation is essential for the success of our efforts in this field.

After the shocking loss of Prime Minister Rabin, some hoped, and maybe still hope, that the peace efforts in the Middle East would stumble. Today, we should all stand firm here and say: "Your hopes are in vain". For peace lovers, there is no time for anguish, there is no time for idleness. In this respect, we welcome the decisiveness of the Government of Israel, demonstrated by the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Jenin. In addition to this, the procedure for the transfer of responsibilities in Tulkarm has already begun. We hope that the withdrawal will continue as scheduled, and there is every indication that it will.

An issue of concern for us remains the economic and social fragility of the peace process. In order to avoid possible negative social repercussions, the success achieved so far should quickly be translated into better living conditions for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza. The tangible support of the international community for the peace process should be shown in expedited economic, financial and technical assistance to the Palestinian people. Turkey, on its own behalf, donated $2 million in 1994 to the Palestinian Authority. We have also pledged a soft loan worth $50 million to the Palestinian Authority through the Turkish Eximbank. We are also cooperating with the Palestinian Authority in training Palestinian officials and students.

Here, we would like to point out the significance of the Middle East Development Bank, which was established during the recent Amman Summit. We believe that this regional development bank will constitute one of the major cornerstones of stable development in our region.

With a direct interest in the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, Turkey has always supported the just cause of the Palestinians. We are ready to back all initiatives in the quest for a settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) on this issue.

We have been actively taking part in the peace process from the very beginning, including in all five multilateral working groups, and will continue to do so. As a part of this effort, Turkey hosted the seventh meeting of the Middle East Multilateral Working Group on Refugees, from 12 to 15 December 1994, in Antalya.

I believe that now is the right time for the international community to expect positive developments in the remaining two tracks — the Syrian and Lebanese — of the Arab-Israeli negotiations. This is essential for further progress and to keep up the momentum. This, of course, requires the political will of the parties. In this context, we regard the continuing efforts of third parties as praiseworthy and hope that they will lead to an eventual breakthrough.

Seizing this opportunity, I should also like to reiterate my Government's stand on the situation in

Lebanon. We attach great importance to the maintenance of the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of that country. We stress the significance of the full and strict implementation of the Taif Agreement by all parties concerned, and we once again stress the need for implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

A lasting solution to the Middle East conflict can be based only upon the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to exist in peace behind internationally recognized and secure borders. The peace we are talking about is one that the peoples of the region have been yearning for since the end of the First World War. This is why it is so dear. This is why we hasten to reap its benefits. This is why, once again, we are urging all the parties to do their utmost for its attainment.

Agenda item 122

Financing of the United Nations peace-keeping forces in the Middle East

(a) United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/50/792)

The Acting President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official record.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I further remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we shall proceed to take a decision in the same manner as in the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/50/792).

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 50/20).

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, who wishes to make a statement in explanation of position on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to explain the position of my delegation in respect of the draft resolution A/50/L.50 relating to the financing of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force.

We wish to put on record that had this draft resolution been put to the vote, we would have voted against it, in keeping with the constant and principle position of the Syrian Arab Republic which we expressed at previous sessions of the General Assembly. Our position is that the funding of the Force should be borne by Israel as it was Israel's aggressive practices that gave rise to the existence of this Force.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded the present stage of our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 122.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to make an announcement concerning the General Assembly's programme of work.

This afternoon, as the first item, the Assembly will take action on the recommendations which the General Committee adopted at its 5th and 6th meetings, held on 28 and 30 November 1995 respectively, and which are contained in its fourth report (A/50/250/Add.3).

On Monday, 4 December, in the morning, the Assembly will first take up sub-item (f) of agenda item 17 for the appointment of the two remaining members of the Committee on Conferences, and then agenda item 24 — Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.